

Atlantic Beach Synopsis

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Atlantic Beach Synopsis

Property

I. Introduction

This synopsis of the Atlantic Beach Land Development Plan is designed for distribution to all residents and property owners of Atlantic Beach and its one mile extraterritorial jurisdiction. The essential elements of the recently adopted land development plan have been summarized in this document for the convenience of the reader. Hopefully, the distribution of this synopsis will enable all property owners of Atlantic Beach and its one mile extraterritorial jurisdiction to become aware of the basic planning efforts that are being made in Atlantic Beach, and encourage all citizens to participate in the planning process. More detailed information can be obtained from the land development plan which is available at the Atlantic Beach Town Hall.

II. Planning Process

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The planning efforts for this land development plan were initiated by the CAMA of 1974. This act provided the guidance and resources needed by all the local governments in the Coastal area of North Carolina to prepare a comprehensive land development plan. Collectively, the land development plans that have been prepared in response to the CAMA, should provide an overall plan of development for coastal North Carolina.

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The development of the Atlantic Beach Land Development Plan has emphasized the need for citizen participation during the planning process. To assure the land development plan was a reflection of the desires and wishes of the citizens of Atlantic Beach, input was solicited in many ways. First of all public input was solicited by use of public meetings. There was a total of 4 public meetings held in the Atlantic Beach Town Hall for the purpose of explaining the requirements and objectives of the Coastal Area Management Act, and to solicit public

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input in the planning process. These meetings were scheduled in order to allow both permanent and summer residents of Atlantic Beach to participate. Approximately eighty (80) individuals participated in these public meetings. In addition to these public meetings, all planning board meetings during the past year have devoted time to discussing the land development plan for Atlantic Beach.

Questionnaires were also used to solicit public input during the planning process. There was a total of five hundred (500) questionnaires mailed to property owners of Atlantic Beach and the one mile extraterritorial jurisdiction of which one hundred seventy-five (175) were returned. Although there were relatively few property owners that participated in the public input process, the input was very consistent and considered significant by the Atlantic Beach Planning Commission. The following is a brief summary of the results of the public input process.

Most property owners that participated in the planning process indicated they would like to see Atlantic Beach remain basically a residential resort area. Many expressed concern about current high density levels, and indicated they would like to see future density somewhat lower. Consistent response indicated a need to separate entertainment activities from other commercial activities. There was a strong indication of a need to encourage entertainment activities for all residents and property owners as well as basic commercial development. Most participants indicated a need to protect and preserve the "public beach" as well as the natural resources of the beach area. Municipal services such as water, sewer, police, fire, rescue, and solid waste disposal were mentioned repeatedly. Finally, private property rights and governmental coordination were emphasized during the public input process.

A more detailed analysis of the questionnaires and public meetings are included in the land development plan. It is hoped the issues and objec-

tives for local planning included in this synopsis reflect the desires of the property owners and will offer guidance during the planning period.

III. Land Development Issues

An integral part of any planning progress is the identification of the land development issues that will have to be faced during the planning period. Through careful analysis of public input as well as an analysis of the present and past land use conditions, land use issues for the Atlantic Beach Planning Areas were determined. These issues are the basis for the land development objectives, policies, and standards that will determine the decision making process during the planning period. Without facing up to the land development issues, planning will not be effective. The following issues have been identified by the participants in the planning process.

1. The impact of population trends will certainly be of great importance in the Atlantic Beach Planning Area. The built-in growth of four hundred eighty-seven (487) vacant lots in the planning area indicates the magnitude of this issue. Due to the small nature of many of these lots it is estimated by the Planning Board that two hundred forty (240) dwelling units could be built on these vacant lots. In addition to the existing lots, there are also 150 vacant developable acres in the planning area.

If this population growth occurs, there will be many impacts on Atlantic Beach. The presence of these built-in growth factors will certainly have an impact on Atlantic Beach. There will be additional demands for water and sewer services, as well as all other municipal services. There will be additional pressure placed on the existence of the natural resources within the planning area, and the nature of the entire resort area will be affected. Land development decisions must be made as to what type and what level of development is desired. Without these decisions and their implementation, the planning process will not be effective.

Economic trends are equally important. The amount and type of commercial development in Atlantic Beach has a great deal of influence on the overall development patterns. Economics influence the amount of people that visit an area, as well as the type of people that visit an area. The types of land use occurring in an area as well as their location affect economic trends. Planning efforts should consider the economic needs of the year round and seasonal population in the Atlantic Beach Planning Area.

2. The protection of natural environments, and the preservation of productive natural resources is an important land use issue in the Atlantic Beach Planning Area. Atlantic Beach is located on the beautiful and fragile Outer Banks of North Carolina. The frontal dunes and beaches of Atlantic Beach are not only beautiful, but also add to the stability of the entire area. The wetlands and estuarine waters of Bogue Sound are productive natural resources. Planning efforts must recognize the potential effect development will have on these and other resources of the Atlantic Beach Planning Area. If this is not done, development will be a liability instead of an asset.

3. The need for municipal services is also an important issue for Atlantic Beach. This area of the Outer Banks is growing and the residents and property owners are demanding more and more from the local government. The most important services that are needed at this time are central water and sewer services. Without these services, future development will be severely restricted. In addition, the need for expanded fire, police, rescue and solid waste disposal services will be present as development occurs.

If Atlantic Beach is going to continue to develop, the type and level of services provided by the town must be addressed in the planning process.

IV. Objectives, Policies, and Standards for Planning in the Atlantic Beach Planning Area

Once the major land use issues have been identified, a method of handling these issues must be formulated. This has been done in the Atlantic Beach Land Development

Plan by the identification of land use objectives, policies, and standards. These objectives for local planning have been developed by the participants in the public input system and are a reflection of their wishes and desires. It is important to remember that all land use objectives are not equally obtainable. With this in mind, "trade-offs" must be made in order to arrive at decisions that are consistent with the overall desires of the residents and property owners of the Atlantic Beach Planning Area.

A. Encourage the development of a residential vacation resort area through:

1. Land use regulations that encourage basically low density single family residential development, and some well planned multi-family development.
2. Encourage commercial development that will provide services and entertainment for all residents of Atlantic Beach as well as day visitors.
3. Encourage development that will be compatible with existing development.

(a) Emphasize the separation of residential and commercial uses.

(b) Emphasize the separation of commercial uses and entertainment uses that may not be compatible.

B. Encourage and strive for the preservation of the barrier island system that Atlantic Beach is a part of through:

1. Seeking assistance in preventing erosion of the "Public Beach" provided by the Town of Atlantic Beach.
2. Protection of vegetation in the undeveloped areas.
3. Protection of all remaining frontal dunes.
4. Protection of wetland and estuarine waters by establishing land use regulations that will minimize fresh water runoff and the likelihood of septic tank seepage into the estuarine waters.

C. Preserving the natural beauty of the barrier island system through:

(a) Land development that conforms to the topography of the Outer Banks.

(b) Land development that conforms to existing development.

D. Encourage commercial development that will address the needs of the residential development that is projected for the Town of Atlantic Beach by:

1. Encouraging commercial development that will address the needs and desires of all age groups visiting or residing in Atlantic Beach.

2. Encouraging full enjoyment of private property rights.

(a) Providing adequate facilities, such as parking, so visitors will not be encouraged to infringe on private property rights.

(b) Encouraging land development that is compatible with existing development so as to protect private property rights.

(c) Encouraging the development of better access to Bogue Banks, and easier access along Bogue Banks in accordance with the Department of Transportation's plan to improve the two lane road along Bogue Banks.

(d) Emphasizing and protecting the public beach area provided by Atlantic Beach.

1. Through promoting programs to prevent littering and programs to emphasize proper maintenance.

2. Encouraging the development of additional parking areas near the beach area.

(e) Encouraging the coordination of all local governments on Bogue Banks so as to maximize the economic potential of the area while protecting the aesthetic and environmental integrity of the area.

E. Provide those services that will be necessary to serve the existing population and projected population by:

1. Encouraging the development of regional water and sewer services.

2. Emphasizing police, fire, and rescue protection that will accommodate the projected population demands. Year-round population is becoming more significant and should be considered as well as summer peak populations).

3. Continue to provide solid waste disposal services in accordance with projected growth.

4. Coordinating transportation efforts with the Department of Transportation and the development patterns of Atlantic Beach.

5. Evaluating all taxes, permits, and fees to assure all citizens that are using the city services are assessed equally for these services.

Land Use Conditions and Trends

The Town of Atlantic Beach is a vacation resort area located on the barrier island system of North Carolina. Development began in this area during the early 1900's and was accelerated by the development of the first bridge to the mainland in 1927. Incorporation occurred in 1937.

A. Past Land Use Conditions and Trends

The Atlantic Beach Planning Area has developed as basically a residential resort area, supported by commercial development related to the tourist attractions of the area. The original residential development of Atlantic Beach occurred on the south side of the "Salter Path Road" in the general area of the public beach. As the popularity of the beach grew, the development began to expand to the east and west along the ocean front. The most recent development in the planning area of Atlantic Beach has occurred on the north side of the "Salter Path Road." A great deal of this development has occurred on areas that were originally marsh land, but were filled in as finger canals were dredged in the area. Currently 37% of the Atlantic Beach Planning Area is developed.

Existing Residential Development

Housing Units	-740
Mobile Homes	-629
Motel Units	-424 (17 motels)

This residential development accounts for approximately 362 acres and 88% of all development within the planning area of Atlantic Beach.

Commercial development within the Atlantic Beach planning area represents 12% of total development or a total of 50 acres. This development includes 83 commercial uses, most of which are related to the tourist industry. Many are located in the same building accounting for the relatively small acreage. These commercial uses are located basically along the Atlantic Beach causeway, the Salter Path Road, and the entertainment circle.

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Atlantic Beach has a wide fluctuation in summer and winter population. The 1970 census indicated the year round population of Atlantic Beach was 300. A survey of recent development patterns indicate more year round residents are moving to Atlantic Beach. It is estimated by the Atlantic Beach Planning Board that there is a current year round population of 500 in the planning area.

The estimated summer population for the Atlantic Beach Planning Area is intended to reflect the total number of people that are housed in the Atlantic Beach planning area during the height of the tourist season. There are several different types of housing units within the planning area that could account for different occupancy rates during the tourist season. After careful consideration, the Planning Commission felt that an average occupancy rate of four (4) per housing unit would indicate a realistic summer population figure. It should be noted that all housing units are not expected to be occupied at once. Also, many housing units can accommodate ten to twenty people during peak periods. The average occupancy rate of four (4) per housing unit reflects the extremely high summer population that exists in the resort area of Atlantic Beach.

	<u>Atlantic Beach</u>				
	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1975</u>
Year Round	-	49	76	300	500
Summer	-	-	-	4,131	7,360

The existing land use map shown here indicates some existing land use problems related to past development trends. Some of these problems are identified below:

1. Development has been very dense in some areas.
2. Some development has given little regard to the frontal dunes system.
3. Past development has not protected the wetlands that border Atlantic Beach on Bogue Sound
4. Proper waste disposal systems have not been used. There are too many septic tanks in areas that can not adequately handle them.

5. Commercial and residential development have not always been separated properly.
6. In many cases, building techniques have given little regard to the fact that Atlantic Beach is in a Flood Prone Area.

There are some examples of development that has not been planned properly.

B. Future Demands

During the next ten years, Atlantic Beach could potentially incur a significant amount of growth. Current trends indicate that 88% to 90% of all development will be residential. The remaining growth is expected to include those commercial uses that will provide services and entertainment for the expected residential growth.

Built-in Growth

There are approximately 275 usable vacant acres within the Atlantic Beach Planning Area that could be devoted to residential development. Frontal dunes, wetlands, and rights-of-way have not been included in this total. Of the 275 usable acres there are approximately 487 platted residential lots in the city limits accounting for approximately 50 acres. (many of the lots are very small and many have to be combined in order to meet minimum waste disposal regulations). For the purposes of this document, the Planning Board has estimated that the 487 lots could account for a potential growth factor of 324 dwelling units. In the one mile extraterritorial jurisdiction of Atlantic Beach there are 225 vacant residential acres.

Population Desires

Arriving at a projected density for the Atlantic Beach Planning Area that is consistent with public desires and the capability of the land to support development, has been a difficult task. The following analysis of estimated growth is based on the assumption that central water and sewer services will be provided in the near future.

Public input has indicated a desire for low density single family development and well planned multi-family development. With this in mind an average density of 3.5 living units per acre was determined as a desirable average density. The following

chart will indicate the potential growth that could occur at this density.

Growth Potential		
	Vacant Acres	Potential Living Units
City Limits	50	324
One Mile	225	700
Total	275	1,024

After careful consideration of all factors, the Atlantic Beach Planning Board and Town Board determined that 95% of potential development will occur in 50 years. This means that approximately 973 living units could be added in 50 years. Assuming an average occupancy rate of four (4) per dwelling this would mean an additional 3,829 people could be accommodated in the planning area within 50 years.

The 10 year population, ~~estimated population~~, is much more difficult to determine. It has been estimated that 25% of total development will occur in 10 years, accounting for an additional 957 people and a total peak population of 8,317. This estimate is intended to indicate that significant development is anticipated and desirable in the next 10 years.

Population Estimates for the Atlantic Beach Planning Area					
	1975	1980	1985	2000	2025
Year Round	500	600	700	1000	1500
Summer	7,360	7,848	8,317	9,764	11,189

Land Capability

Without proper planning it will be difficult for Atlantic Beach to accommodate the anticipated growth. Planning efforts should consider design of lots, separation from and preservation of fragile areas, open space, preservation of vegetation, and methods of sewage disposal.

Sewage disposal is expected to be the most difficult problems. The development of a central sewage system for the planning area will be essential. Without a central

sewage system, population projections will have to be revised in order to assure the fragile environment of Atlantic Beach is protected.

Other services that will be demanded by the growing population will include police, fire, rescue, and solid waste disposal. The population projections presented in this plan will help determine the need for these services.

C. Constraints on Future Development

There are many constraints on future development in the Atlantic Beach Planning Area. This means there are many characteristics about the area that cause development to be expensive or not appropriate. These conditions include the presence of sand dunes that are very sensitive and necessary to the Outer Banks. In addition the presence of productive wetlands along Bogue Sound, as well as the sound itself is a constraint on development. The fact that Atlantic Beach is almost entirely in a Flood Prone area is also a constraint on development.

VI. Land Classification

The Coastal Area Management Act requires that all counties and towns covered by the Act classify all the land within their jurisdiction according to the Land Classification System as defined by the Act. This classification system includes the following categories:

1. Developed - Lands where existing population density is moderate to high and where there are a variety of land uses which have the necessary public services (in particular central water and sewer services).
2. Transitional - Lands where local government plans to accommodate moderate to high density development during the following ten years and where necessary public services will be provided to accommodate that growth.
3. Community - Lands where low density development is grouped in existing settlements or will occur in such settlements during the following ten year period, and will not require extensive public services now and in the future.

4. Rural - Lands where highest land use is for agriculture, forestry, mining, water supply, etc., based on their natural resources potential. Also, lands for future land needs not currently recognized.
5. Conservation - Fragile, hazard and other lands necessary to maintain a healthy natural environment and necessary to provide for the public health, safety, or welfare.

The Coastal Area Management Act requires the classification of land within the municipalities to consider the needs of the overall county. The classification of land throughout the county has attempted to identify adequate amounts of all land classifications, to accommodate the anticipated demand on the land for the next ten years. The Town of Atlantic Beach has coordinated its classification efforts with the overall Carteret County Plan. A joint city-county meeting was held to assure the consistency between the two plans.

Atlantic Beach Land Classification

Due to the anticipated moderate density development of Atlantic Beach and its one mile extraterritorial jurisdiction, the developable land area has been classified as transitional. This classification assumes central water and sewer services will be provided.

The wetlands, beaches, frontal dunes, erosion areas, and flood hazard areas have been classified as conservation. Development should give special attention to these areas.

VII. Review of the Plan

Planning is a continual process. Each five years the Town of Atlantic Beach will undertake an extensive public input system and subsequently revise the Land Development Plan if the input so indicates.

VIII. Potential Areas of Environmental Concern

The Coastal Area Management Act has charged the Coastal Resources Commission with the responsibility of identifying Areas of Environmental Concern in the twenty coastal counties. This requirement has been made because the North Carolina

Legislature felt the coastal area, and in particular the estuaries, are among the most biologically productive region of this state. In recent years, increased pressure for development has jeopardized some of these very productive and valuable areas. For this reason the Coastal Area Management Act requires that local plans pay particular attention to development that may affect these areas.

The following is an identification of potential Areas of Environmental Concern that are located in Atlantic Beach.

1. Coastal Wetlands - Any salt marsh or other marsh subject to regular or occasional flooding by tides.

Appropriate Land Use - These marshes should be considered unsuitable for all development which will alter their natural functions. Examples of acceptable land uses may include utility easements, fishing piers, docks, certain agricultural uses and such other uses which do not significantly alter the natural functions of the marsh.

2. Estuarine Waters - All the water of the Atlantic Ocean within the boundary of North Carolina and all the waters of the bays, sounds, rivers, and tributaries thereto seaward of the dividing line between coastal fishing waters and inland fishing waters.

Appropriate Land Use - Highest priority shall be allocated to the conservation of estuarine waters. The development of navigational channels, the use of bulkheads to prevent erosion, and the building of piers or wharfs where no other feasible alternative exists are examples of land use appropriate within estuarine waters provided that such uses will not be detrimental to the biological and physical estuarine function and public trust rights.

3. Areas Subject to Public Rights - Certain Public Trust Areas - Areas such as waterways and land under or flowed by tidal waters or navigable waters, to which the public may have rights of access or public trust rights and areas which the State of North Carolina may be authorized to preserve, con-

serve, or protect under the North Carolina Constitution.

Appropriate Land Uses - The development of navigational channels, drainage ditches, the use of bulkheads to prevent erosion, and the building of piers or wharfs are examples of appropriate land uses provided that such land uses will not be detrimental to the biological and physical functions and public trust rights.

4. Natural Hazard Areas - General - Natural hazard areas are areas where uncontrolled or incompatible development could unreasonably endanger life or property. These include areas especially vulnerable to erosion, flooding, or other adverse effects of sand, wind, and water. Examples of these areas include:

A. Sand dunes along the Outer Banks, which are defined as loose wind-blown material, usually sand.

Appropriate Land Use - includes only those developments that can safely be undertaken utilizing recognized engineering practices and site preparation and site maintenance to minimize unnecessary damage from wind and water should be allowed.

B. Ocean Beaches and Shorelines (on the Outer Banks) are defined as the area between the mean low tide to a landward point where vegetation begins or to a point where the frontal dunes begin.

Appropriate Land Use - within these areas should be only those that preserve these areas so their physical, aesthetic, cultural and recreational qualities can be enjoyed by everyone. All development should be built to withstand the prevalent natural forces of this area.

C. Coastal Floodplains - The land areas adjacent to coastal sounds, estuaries or the ocean which are prone to flooding from storms with an annual probability of one percent or greater (100 year storm).

Appropriate Land Use - Development activities must conform with the standards of the Federal Insurance Administration for coastal high hazard

areas and safety during the flood surge from a 100 year storm.

- D. Excessive Erosion Areas - Areas where geologic and soil conditions are such that there is a substantial possibility of excessive erosion. These areas include areas along the ocean and sound that could reasonably be expected to erode in a 25 year period.

Appropriate Land Use - Permanent land uses shall not be considered appropriate unless stabilization has been achieved along the affected reach. Recreational, rural and conservation activities represent appropriate uses in these erodible areas where shoreline protective construction has not been completed.

It should be noted that all areas that are designated Areas of Environmental Concern will require a permit before development can take place. Minor projects, defined as projects less than 20 acres or which involve construction of one or more structures having an area less than 60,000 square feet, will obtain permits from the local governments. Major projects, defined as projects currently needing state permits, those greater than 20 acres in size, those involving drilling or excavating natural resources or land or underwater, and those involving construction of one or more structures having an area in excess of 60,000 square feet will require a permit from the Coastal Resources Commission.

Summary

In order for this plan to be effective it must be implemented. During the next year the Atlantic Beach Town Board and Planning Board will attempt to assure all local land use ordinances reflect the objectives for local planning that have been included in this plan. Efforts will be made to develop criterias for development in fragile areas of Atlantic Beach. Continued public input and support will be necessary to assure Atlantic Beach is planned properly.

One of the most important factors in implementing this plan will be the development

of a central sewer system. Without a sewer system, development will be constrained. During the next year the Town of Atlantic Beach will make every effort to develop and implement a regional sewer plan.

Atlantic Beach urges you to get involved in planning for the future of your town. By attending Planning Board meetings and other public meetings you can influence the future of your town.

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